

01/07/2010

Flying High

Staff
State Capitol

West Virginia's aviation business is soaring. Thursday Governor Joe Manchin proclaimed January General Aviation Appreciation Month.

Susan Chernenko, the director of the Aeronautics Commission for the West Virginia Department of Transportation, says her agency and the federal government are offering the more than 40 airports located in the state a helping hand.

"We are providing more funding and assistance to airports than ever has been done in the past," she said.

Aeronautics is big business in West Virginia. Chernenko says general aviation alone brings in more than \$46 million a year. "They buy fuel in West Virginia. They hanger their planes at our airports in West Virginia. They're shopping. They're dining. They're purchasing items from our stores within our counties," she said.

Chernenko says that adds up to cash that goes right back into the county where the airport is located. And even if you never step foot on a plane, you're still reaping the benefits from that tax base.

Over the last decade, Chernenko says the state's airports have made giant strides in improving service, flights and space for more planes. That's something business owners are looking for when they considering locating here. "One of the first things a business may ask coming to West Virginia is, 'How many airports do you have?' They also ask, 'Where are your airports located?' They need to make sure they can get in and out of our state as well as bring their goods and services in and out of the state," she said.

Those at Thursday's news conference said the state is on the right flight path to improve even more in the next decade.

[Back](#)

Proclamation

by Governor Joe Manchin III

- Whereas,** aviation and aircraft manufacturing plays a critical role in the lives of our citizens, businesses and farms; and,
- Whereas,** the state of West Virginia has a significant interest in the continued vitality of the health of General Aviation, aircraft manufacturing, airline industries, educational institutions, aviation organizations and companies such as Aurora Flight Sciences, Bombardier Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, Pratt & Whitney and Tiger Aircraft that have manufacturing and repair facilities in the state; and,
- Whereas,** West Virginia has 34 airports serving 1,859 pilots and 1,348 general aviation aircraft; and,
- Whereas,** aircraft manufacturing is important to the state's economy, with aerospace employment increasing by nearly 600 jobs between 2000 and 2005, making it one of the fastest-growing sectors of the West Virginia economy; and,
- Whereas,** total direct and indirect jobs attributed to the local aerospace industry number total about 3,200, providing a direct wage and benefit impact of about \$46 million; and,
- Whereas,** General Aviation in West Virginia contributes \$616 million, or \$333 per capita to the state's economy; and,
- Whereas,** West Virginia is home to eight charter flight companies, 12 repair stations, and three flight schools operating 10 aircrafts and providing 15 jobs with 20 fixed-based operators in the state; and,
- Whereas,** given our state's geography, a great many businesses and communities depend upon General Aviation aircraft and small aircraft of all types for access to medical treatment, mobility, economic opportunity, disaster relief and a wide range of critical resources; and,
- Whereas,** use of General Aviation by businesses and farms in West Virginia are directly tied to the future growth and prosperity of the State;

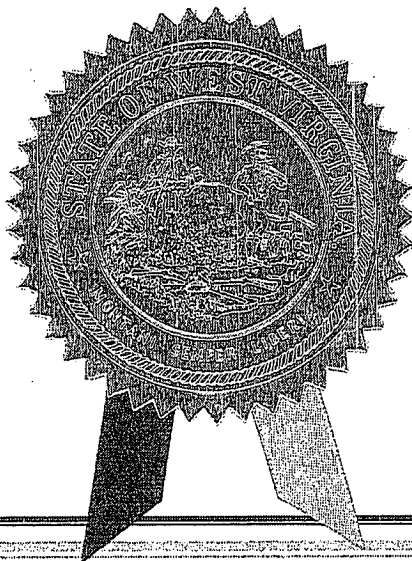
Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that I, Joe Manchin III, Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim *January 2010* as:

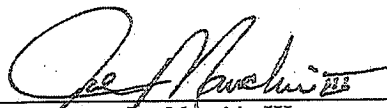
General Aviation Appreciation Month

in the Mountain State and encourage all citizens to recognize the vital strategic resource that aviation is in West Virginia.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Thirtieth day of December, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Nine, and in the One Hundred Forty-seventh year of the State.




Joe Manchin III
Governor

By the Governor:



Natalie E. Tennant
Secretary of State